Rs.5/- per kg. of tea is being provided; launching of a quality upgradation Programme by the Tea Board in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu for improving quality of tea manufactured by small growers to help better price realisation and increasing basic custom duty on import of tea from 15% to 35% etc.

**Benefit of new export policy to onion producing farmers**

†5. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether onion producing farmers and businessmen have been benefited by new export policy of Government and whether onion producing farmers are going to be benefited till the implementation of Government's decision regarding the export;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether onion producing farmers are likely to face crisis in the next crop as a result of the export policy; and

(d) if so, who is responsible for it and what immediate steps have been taken by Government to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Under the present export policy for onion, Government has been releasing quota for export of onion through designated canalising agencies from time to time, keeping domestic requirement in focus. On 26.4.2000, Government permitted export of 50,000 MTs of all varieties of onions during the period 26.4.2000 till 31.5.2000 through the designated canalising agencies. On 17.5.2000, Government permitted additional export of 50,000 MTs of all varieties of onions, other than Bangalore Rose and Krishnapuram onions, during May, June and July, 2000. Restrictions on export of Bangalore Rose and Krishnapuram onions have been removed with effect from 26.4.2000 and the same are now being exported freely through Karnataka State Agricultural Produce Processing & Export Corporation Ltd.(KAPPEC), Bangalore and AP MARKFED, Hyderabad respectively. The Government has also evolved a long-term export policy for onion. Under this long-term policy,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

quotas for export of onion for the next crop year would be announced in advance and periodic quotas would be released based on harvest/market arrivals and flush/lean season availability. Government's export policy for onion will benefit both the growers as well as the businessmen safeguarding consumer requirements.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

**Suicide by Tobacco farmers**

-6. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco farmers are committing suicide as STC did not purchase the produce from the farmers of Andhra Pradesh in Veerulapadu Mandal;

(b) if so, the reasons for not lifting the stocks by STC; and

(c) the action proposed to ensure that farmers are given time to repay loans in view of hardships faced by them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN:): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Banks have been advised not to recover crop loan advances from the tobacco farmers sales of the first two lots put for sale at the auctions.

**Strategic partnership treaty signed between India and EU**

7. SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and European Union have signed a strategic partnership treaty mainly covering economy and trade;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the treaty would promote the Indian interests in